Amateur Radio Newsline(tm) Report 1381 – January 30, 2004

Amateur Radio Newsline report number 1381 with a release date of Friday, January 30, 2004 to follow in 5-4-3-2-1.

The following is a Q-S-T.

Hams across the nation react to the ARRL restructuring proposal and the first B-P-L law suit involving ham radio is threatened in Austria. These stories and an interview with ARRL President Jim Haynie, W5JBP, highlight this weeks Amateur Radio Newsline report number 1381 coming your way right now!

(Billboard Cart Here)

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RESTRUCTURING: HAMS REACT TO THE ARRL NO-CODE PROPOSAL

Hams are starting to react to the recent ARRL proposal to restructure the United States Amateur Radio service, and not surprising the comments are as diverse as the community itself. Amateur Radio Newsline’s David Black, KB4KCH, is at our South-East Bureau with this part of the story:

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If you listen to the ham bands and check out the comments on the qrz.com website, it appears that most amateur radio operators have a somewhat sedate response to the ARRL's restructuring proposal. While some activists make their opposition quite vocal, the majority of comments so far seem to accept the League's initiative, 'though some do express reservations.

"I can live with this" is how some comments go. Others more strongly support the League by saying, "right on, A-double-R-L." The biggest concern most express centers around the ability to monitor the airwaves for rules compliance if explosive growth results. As one operator on 15 meters says, "If we get a million new hams, will the FCC give us 500 more Riley Hollingsworth's to keep them in line?" Hollingsworth handles amateur radio enforcement matters for the Commission.

Some operators say the League's proposal will wind up dumbing down amateur radio. Some even claim to have resigned their ARRL membership, 'though so far, no proof of that has surfaced. Vehement opponents of restructuring may in fact terminate their League memberships, but the number is not expected to be significant.

Restructuring is not a done deal. Announcement of the League's proposal is only the start. The League will formally request that the FCC make a rules change. Once the Commission receives that request, it will be up to the FCC to decide whether or not it will consider the League proposal put it out for public comment. Chances are that it will. Once the proposal is assigned a rule making designation, you will have a chance to make your opinion known.

Comments are likely to come from the general public, the business community and any special interest groups as well as those who hold an FCC assigned call sign.

Stay tuned -- the story's just beginning.

>From the South-East Bureau in Birmingham Alabama, I'm David Black, KB4KCH, reporting for the Amateur Radio Newsline.

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Unless the FCC decides to place the ARRL request on a separate fast-track, you can expect the agency’s first action to be putting it out for initial comment sometime in the next several weeks. (ARNewsline(tm))

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RESTRUCTURING: THE ARRL ON THE ARRL RESTRUCTURING PROPOSAL

The ARRL is now explaining why it has decided to ask the FCC to restructure the United States Amateur Radio Service, and the words are coming straight from the top. Amateur Radio Newsline’s Mark Abramowicz, NT3V, caught up with ARRL President Jim Haynie, W5JBP, by phone and got some insight into why the ARRL Board acted as it did :

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With the American Radio Relay League's imminent filing with the FCC of its proposal for a new, no-code HF entry level license, the debate is certain to heat up.

ARRL President Jim Haynie W5JBP acknowledges the league's proposal will generate some controversy. But he says months of research, surveys and lots of internal debate went into crafting the revival of a Novice-class license.

Yes, Haynie confides, the ARRL's directors and Haynie himself were pressing the flesh - so to speak - for months gathering input from the amateur community. Directors also were conducting informal surveys among ARRL members. And, he says, a professional research company was hired by the league to survey hams about the state of the hobby.

Haynie says the research company's findings were pretty sobering and bolstered the ARRL board's drive for license reform.

"For example, 53 percent, if my memory serves me correct, today of all amateurs now are 55 years or older," Haynie says. "And this is growing at an exponential rate, it's not linear. And this is a very disturbing thought."

He says the results also revealed something the ARRL suspected for some time.

"There's people getting licenses and they're getting involved in what we call, or what I call '2-meter ghettos' and they have no place else to go so they lose interest after about a year or six months or whatever," Haynie explains. "So you've got 200,000 or 300,000 Technician licenses out there who say 'I've tried' and they did and they didn't like it."

Haynie says it became clear one way to recapture the magic of the hobby lay in the experiences many long-time hams had when they first entered amateur radio.

"We went back and thought about, okay, how did it used to work and what was successful about it? And the old Novice class license was extremely successful,

I think. And, we said, 'Well, okay then we have to go back to some form of that.' "

Last year's World Radiocommuncations Conference laid the ground work for countries to decide for themselves what to do about CW and licensing. But Haynie says the WRC '03 decision played a small role in the ARRL's deliberations.

"Morse Code is certainly tradition, I don't deny that," Haynie says. "And I think it's a neat ability. It's a skill. It has nothing to do with intelligence."

Haynie says he and other directors have heard some argue: 'Hey, I had to pass a code test, why shouldn't everyone else.' Haynie says that's like saying I'd like to play golf like Tiger Woods and coming to the realization that's probably not going to happen because you simply don't possess the skills - even with lots of practice. The same logic, he says, applies to CW. For many hams, he says, it's simply not their bag.

Haynie says the ARRL's proposal preserves CW for one license class, yet opens the doors to the world of HF for those who couldn't learn and master Morse Code to pass even a 5-words-per-minute test.

"People, they realize, they've come to grips: We are getting older. And we're not getting the people into Amateur Radio," Haynie says.

"And the amateur community realizes that we've gotta do something. And, I don't say that the league's proposal is perfect. Neither does any of the directors or officers of the league say that. But it was the best that we could come up with that still preserved the Morse Code tradition for the Extra class exam, and yet, gave you the taste of the old Novice that I used to have 30-something years ago."

Haynie says he's confident, based on his experience with the FCC, that the agency will look favorably on the ARRL license proposal.

"I have a gut feeling that they will take a majority of it, at least I think they will. They'll probably fine tune it, they'll tweak it some because that's typical of the federal government," Haynie says.

"But on the other hand, I know, I know that they want to simplify the Amateur Radio Service. They want three classes of licenses. They want to reduce their workload and continue to do what they like to do and amateur radio take care of itself."

And how long does Haynie think it will take the FCC to act and make any changes to the Amateur Radio license structure? He says don't expect a decision anytime soon.

"I don't see anything happening on any of the petitions, including the league's, probably 'til late 2005," Haynie concludes.

Haynie says his e-mail and phone have been busy since the board's vote two weeks ago. He says he's comfortable with the license proposal and is prepared to support and defend it.

Haynie says he had the chance to do so earlier this week before his hometown radio club in Garland, Texas. He says after explaining the league's rationale to the group, those willing to listen asked lots of questions. Haynie says he felt by the time it was over, many appreciated the league's work on behalf of the hobby.

Haynie's next stop: The 44th Tropical Hamboree in Miami on February 7 where he's expecting to get lots of feedback.

For the Amateur Radio Newsline, I'm Mark Abramowicz NT3V in Philadelphia.

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If all went as expected, the ARRL was to transmit its proposal to the FCC on Wednesday, January 28th. And less we forget, a word of congratulations to Jim Haynie on his election to a third term leading the United States only recognized Amateur Radio society. The ARRL Letter Board of Directors expressed its confidence in W5JBP’s leadership on January 16 with a unanimous vote for his him to continue as President. (ARNewsline(tm))

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Break 1

>From the United States of America, We are the Amateur Radio Newsline, heard on bulletin stations around the world including the Catalina repeater Association system serving the City of Angeles from picturesque Catalina Island off the California coastline.

(5 sec pause here)

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THE BPL FIGHT: AUSTRIAN BPL PROVIDER SUING HAMS OVER NEWS STORY

In what looks to be a case of “he said -- no -- he said,” a row is brewing over the introduction of Broadband over Powerline telecommunications in the city of Linz, Austria. One that has a service provider taking that nations Amateur Radio society to court over statements quoted in the media world-wide.

As reported a few weeks ago, stories were circulating that PLT, or Power Line Telecommunications as the Europeans call their BPL system, had been halted in Linz. This, due to interference caused by the system. Also that the Austrian government had enjoined the service provider and the system would never be permitted.

Not true says the BPL provider and the power company and its now headed to court to try to stop the hams from complaining to them and to the press. From across the Atlantic, Jeramy Boot, G4NJH, has more:

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The Austrian national amateur radio society, OeVSV, has objected to the use of PLT in Linz, stating that it causes interference to amateur stations, and issuing a press release which was picked up by the Austrian mass media. It

appears that the OeVSV was misquoted as saying that the Austrian ministry had taken out an injunction against the PLT providers and that the service had been closed down for good in Linz.

The management of Speed-Web Consulting and Linz AG, who are responsible for the PLT transmissions, are disclaiming what they say are "press attacks by Austrian radio amateurs". They say that there has not been any injunction against them and the roll-out of PLT continues.

Speed-Web and Linz AG say that Austrian radio amateurs are doing their best to stop PLT "by filing undue interference complaints". They go on to say that "if there should be any actual, harmful and officially proven interference case caused by Powerline Communications, mitigation measures will solve this very case at that specific location in the concerned frequency".

On the 14th of January, Linz AG stated that it would be suing the OeVSV, as well as its president personally, over this matter.

Jeramy Boot, G4NJH.

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The decision of Linz A G to sue the ham radio operators over the story of BPL says that in this one, big business is willing to go the whole nine yards. (GB2RS)

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THE BPL FIGHT: FCC'S ABERNATHY ACKNOWLEDGES AMATEUR RADIO BPL CONCERNS

Here at home, FCC Commissioner Kathleen Q. Abernathy is apparently shifting away from her definition of BPL as a "Broadband Nirvana." Last week Abernathy specifically cited Amateur Radio concerns about the interference potential of Broadband Over Power Line in remarks she delivered to the Catholic University of America's Columbus School of Law.

According to the ARRL Letter, Abernathy said BPL should not be widely deployed before dealing with ham radio's interference fears. She admitted that she now recognizes that Amateur Radio licensees have raised concerns about the potential for harmful interference. Abernathy described this as something that will have to be addressed before any mass market deployment can occur.

Commissioner Abernathy made her remarks on January 22 at the school's Washington, DC campus. Abernathy said that if engineers can find a way to prevent harmful interference to other radio services, BPL would represent a tremendous advance for consumers, because it could bring broadband to any home that has electric power delivery. (ARRL)

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RADIO LAW: CONGRESS MAY RAISE INDECENCY AND OBSCENITY FINES

Using obscene and indecent language on the airwaves may soon get very expensive. This as congress considers raising the stakes for those who insist on talking dirty on the radio. Amateur Radio Newsline's Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF, has the details:

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United States Representative Fred Upton of Michigan introduced congressional legislation to upthe maximum fine for an indecent broadcast from $27,500 to $275,000. Under the Upton sponsored measure the maximum fine for a continuing violation would be raised from $300,000 to $3 million.

Upton had also scheduled hearings to review the FCC's indecency enforcement policies for January 28th. Ken Johnson, a spokesman for Representative Billy Tauzin of Louisiana is quoted as saying that law makers intend to move the legislation quickly in hopes of sending a signal to broadcasters that enough is enough.

This action comes following recent complaints by FCC Chairman Michael Powell. He says that the existing penalty cap on indecency fines was too low to discourage off-color broadcasts.

For the Amateur Radio Newsline, I’m Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF

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Commissioner Powell believes that once broadcasters start to feel the pinch where in their wallets they will start to think twice about transmitting indecency on the airwaves. (Published news reports)

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ENFORCEMENT: UPS TO THE FCC: YOU HAVE OUR FULL COOPERATION

The FCC has received a letter from United Parcel Service offering the company’s full cooperation in removing any unlicensed radio equipment from its nationwide fleet. This follows a January 7th letter to the Middlesburg Ohio office of U-P-S detailing unlicensed 10 meter operations coming from delivery vehicles in that area.

The FCC also has contacted another trucking company, R and L Transfer of Norwalk Ohio regarding the same type of problem. Unlicensed operators coming to the 10 meter band has been a growing problem around the world in recent years. (FCC)

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ENFORCEMENT: THAT RADAR IS A NO-NO

The FCC has also written to a pair of hams in the Winfield and Haysville Kansas area. This, regarding a reported piece of marine radar equipment mounted in a land based vehicle. According to the FCC the radar unit was being used for storm spotting without being licensed for this use. The identities of those using the radar system were not revealed. (FCC)

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HAMFESTS AND CONVENTIONS: OKLAHOMA IN MARCH

Turning to the social scene, the Green Country Hamfest and ARRL Oklahoma Section Convention is slated for Friday and Saturday, March 19th and 20th at

the Claremore Exposition Center in Claremore Oklahome. Claremore is not far from Tulsa, and the event will feature free parking, loads of vendors, on-site ham radio exams, numerous forum sessions along with some truly nifty prizes. More information is on the web at www.greencountryhamfest.com (KC5FM)

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HAMFESTS AND CONVENTIONS: FIRE CANT STOP THE DIXIFEST IN MEMPHIS

Despite a fire that destroyed its normal venue, Dixiefest 2004 in Memphis Tennessee will happen the weekend of February 14 and 15. Planners were able to find a new home at the Mid-South Fairgrounds' Pipkin Building. This is only a proverbial stones-throw from the Shelby County Building which was destroyed in the December 2003 blaze. More information about this premiere event can be found on-line. Just take your web browser to www.dixifest.org and take a peek. (Via e-mail)

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BREAK 2

This is ham radio news for today's radio amateur. From the United States of America, We are the Amateur Radio Newsline with links to the world from our only official website at www.arnewsline.org and being relayed by the volunteer services of the following radio amateur:

(5 sec pause here)

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OUR GOLDEN PAST: CARL & JERRY "LIVE" AGAIN

Its time for a trip back to the 1950's. To a kinder and gentler Amateur Radio. Our tour guide for this journey is Bruce Tennant, K6PZW:

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Remember the names Carl and Jerry? Well if you were playing with ham radio in the 1950's and 1960's you are well aware that these are the first names of the two fictitious teenage electronic whizze's. Characters created by the late John T. Frye, W9EGV, for his long-running magazine series of the same name.

The Carl and Jerry stories appeared in Popular Electronics from October 1954 through December 1964. They told of the adventures of two perennial teenage boys who shared a special bond because of their shared love of music, electronics and radio. Now, many of these stories are again available to read to enjoy thanks to a new spot on the world-wide-web. Better yet, they are the kind of stuff you may want to read to your grandkids, especially if they have the same wonderment as you when you were their age.

Where are they and how do you these Pop Com classics? Thats easy. Just follow to link you will find in this weeks print edition of this Amateur Radio Newsline report. And good news for our sight impaired listeners. Word is that the print works well with most devices to help the blind to read as well.

Traveling back in time for the Amateur Radio Newsline, I’m Bruce Tennant, K6PZW, enjoying the past.

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So far there are only 21 of the stories in the seriers on the web, but enough to keep you glued to your computer screen for several hours. They are there to read at http://home.gwi.net/~jdebell/pe/cj/cnjindex.htm (ARNewsline(tm))
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INTERNATIONAL - IARU: NEW IARU REGION 2 ARDF WEBSITE

Back to the present and word that Region II of the International Amateur Radio Union now has web site to serve as the voice of its Amateur Radio Direction Finding Working Group. The site provide links to official rules and regional results along with contact information for A-R-D-F groups and individuals throughout the Region.

Plans call for the site to be in four languages that include English, Spanish, French, and Portuguese. If you have any comments or wish to volunteer with the translations, please contact Dale Hunt, WB6BYU or Ken Harker ,WM5R. Their respective e-mails are wb6byu@arrl.net and wm5r@arrl.net. The website can be found at www.ardf-r2.org (Press release)

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INTERNATIONAL - UNITED KINGDOM: OFCOM NEW TELECOM REGULATOR

>From the international wire, word that Ofcom is name of the new regulator of Amateur Radio in the United Kingdom. The agency also holds responsibility for control other services that include broadcast television, radio, and numerous wireless communications services. More about Ofcom is on-line www.ofcom.org.uk (GB2RS)

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INTERNATIONAL - VK: AN AUSTRALIAN LICENSE IS REQUIRED

A note to those of you who intend to operate from Australia on an extended visit. It appears that many amateurs, including those operating maritime mobile from within Australia's territorial waters, are using their own callsign with the 'stroke VK' suffix. Under Australian telecommunications law, this is not permitted for any lengthy stay. Once past the grace period, all radio amateurs operating from Australia, and more importantly, from Australia's territorial waters must obtain an Australian license and individual VK callsign from the Australian Communications Authority. If you don’t you will be told to go off the air. (Q-News, RSGB)

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INTRUDER WATCH: HARMONICS BOTHER 20 METERS

An unidentified broadcaster on 14.280 MHz, has been identified as a harmonic of a Radio Liberty. The transmitter in question operates on 4.760 MHz and it’s the 3rd harmonic that been heard in V-K-Land.

Meantime, another intruder on 14.320 MHz has been found to be Radio Uzbeckistan. This time it's the 2nd harmonic of a transmitter on 7.160 that's responsible for what's being heard. (Q-News)

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WITH THE ARRL: MAJOR CHANGE IN DXCC POLICY ANNOUNCED

A major change in the criteria for determining what is a new DXCC entity. An ARRL news release says that the organizations Board of Directors has removed the guideline that provides for an entity to be added to the DXCC list if it has a separate International Amateur Radio Union member society. The ARRL says that this provision had the unintended consequence of bringing in applications for IARU membership that do not further the objectives of the organization. In fact, all it has done is to create what ARRL terms as an unfortunate and unnecessary administrative burden for the IARU. (ARRL)

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DX

In DX, Dwayne Barbee KE4RVT is the latest ham on the air from war-torn Iraq. Q-R-Zed dot com reports that Barbee received his Amateur radio license from the Ministry of Communication on January 25th. He has been assigned YI9RVT and will be operating SSB and CW on all bands for the next 12 to 18 months from the city of Al Kut. (qrz.com)

And word that SM5DIC was scheduled to return to the Democratic Republic of Congo on the 20th of January. He will be there for two months and will operate the club call 9QZ0AR in his spare time. (GB2RS)

Also, AA1M and W1USN will be active as J3 stroke their home calls from Grenada to the 6th of February. They will operate CW, SSB and some PSK on the High Frequency bands. For all of these operations, QSL as directed on the air. (GB2RS)

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THAT FINAL ITEM: RADIO FROM SPACE - THE SETI INSTITUTE IS MONITORING

Lastly this week, scientists searching the stars for aliens are convinced an E.T. is out there -- it's just that they haven't had the know-how to detect such a being. Amateur Radio Newsline's Norm Seeley, KI7UP, has the rest of the story:

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Science Online says that technological advances have opened the way for scientists to check millions of previously unknown star systems, dramatically increasing the chances of finding intelligent life in outer space in the next 25 years.

The article quotes Seth Shostak. Shostak is the senior astronomer at California's non-profit Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence Institute says that it is like looking for needles in the haystack that is our galaxy, but there could be thousands of needles out there. But on a recent visit to Australia to attend a conference on extraterrestrial research, Shostak said

detecting alien life is only the start.

Since it was founded in 1984, the SETI Institute has monitored radio signals, hoping to pick up a transmission from outer space. Its Project Phoenix conducts two annual three-week sessions on a radio telescope at Arecibo, Puerto Rico. Project Phoenix, is the privately funded successor to an original NASA program that searched the heavens for signals from extra-terrestrial beings. That program was canceled in 1993 amid much skepticism in the Congress regarding the possibility of life in outer space.

For the Amateur Radio Newsline. I’m Norm Seeley, KI7UP

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But Science Online says that the search has been slow. About 500 of 1,000 targeted stars have been examined and no extraterrestrial transmissions have been heard. (ScienceOnLine)

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NEWSCAST CLOSE

With thanks to Alan Labs, AMSAT, the ARRL, the CGC Communicator, CQ Magazine, the FCC, the Ohio Penn DX Bulletin, Radio Netherlands, Rain, the RSGB and Australia's Q-News, that's all from the Amateur Radio Newsline(tm). Our e-mail address is newsline@arnewsline.org. More information is available at Amateur Radio Newsline's(tm) only official website located at www.arnewsline.org. You can also write to us or support us at Amateur Radio Newsline(tm), P.O. Box 660937, Arcadia, California 91066.

A reminder that the newly created Roy Neal, K6DUE, Amateur Radio Mentoring Project is up and operating. We already have signed up close to a dozen hams who are willing to assist others. If you can help, or if you need assistance please drop a note with your name, address, hone number and area of expertise to mentor@arnewsline.org

For now, with Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF, at the editors desk, I’m Don Wilbanks, AE5DW, saying 73 and we thank you for listening." Amateur Radio Newsline(tm) is Copyright 2004. All rights reserved.